

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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R 181649Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1613

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGABOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LOME 0139

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TO

SUBJECT: COMMEMORATION OF TEN YEARS OF PRESIDENT EYADEMA'S
RULE

BEGIN SUMMARY. JANUARY 13, 1977 WAS THE TENTH ANNI-
VERSARY OF PRESIDENT EYADEMA'S SEIZURE OF POWER FROM
THE FALTERING CIVILIAN REGIME OF PRESIDENT NICHOLAS
GRUNITSKY IN 1967. THE CELEBRATION TOOK ON THE
CHARACTER OF A VIRTUAL APOTHEOSIS. EYADEMA'S FIRST
TEN YEARS OF RULE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL. HE FACES
A WIDE RANGE OF PROBLEMS AS THE PRESUMED SECOND TEN
YEARS OF HIS RULE OPENS. HE HAS SHOWN CAPACITY FOR
GROWTH AND ADAPTABILITY WHICH WILL MAKE HIM DIFFICULT
TO DISLodge BY ANY OPPOSITION GROUP. DESPITE THE
AUTHORITARIAN NATURE OF HIS REGIME, EYADEMA'S
STATURE BOTH AS A NATIONAL LEADER AND INTERNATIONAL
FIGURE HAVE GROWN. HIS CHANCES FOR CONTINUING IN
POWER ARE GOOD -- IF HE FOLLOWS POLICIES OF
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REALISM. END SUMMARY.

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1. CELEBRATION OF THE TENTH YEAR OF THE RULE OF
GENERAL GNASSINGBE EYADEMA AS PRESIDENT OF TOGO
BEGAN DIRECTLY AFTER THE NEW YEAR. A SERIES OF
INAUGURATIONS OF PROJECTS, BUILDINGS, DEDICATIONS
OF SCHOOLS, UNVEILING OF STATUES, LAYING OF CORNER-
STONES, ETC. TOOK PLACE AND A GENERAL AIR OF
MOUNTING EXCITEMENT MIXED WITH FATIGUE SETTLED

OVER TOGO AS JANUARY 13 FINALLY APPROACHED. IN A COUNTRY ALREADY HEAVILY COMMITTED TO THE CULT OF PERSONALITY, NEW HEIGHTS WERE ACHIEVED IN FINDING WAYS TO GLORIFY PRESIDENT EYADEMA. EDITORIAL WRITERS STRAINED TO FIND WORDS SUFFICIENTLY ADEQUATE TO DESCRIBE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EVENT. SUCH TERMS AS "CONSECRATION," "CORONATION," "APOTHEOSIS" WERE USED.

2. ON JANUARY 13 EVENTS BEGAN WITH A PARADE WHICH LASTED FOUR HOURS AND APPEARED TO INCLUDE NEARLY EVERY CITIZEN IN TOGO. THE PARADE WAS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE MARCH PAST OF THE VERY FIT AND WELL-DISCIPLINED-APPEARING TOGOLESE ARMY INCLUDING TWO NEW IMPRESSIVE APPEARING PARATROOPER BATTALIONS. TOGOLESE ARMED FORCES WERE VERY WELL EQUIPPED AND SHOWED OFF THEIR NEW ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND ARMORED CARS. ACCORDING TO THE ABIDJAN-BASED U.S. ASSISTANT DEFENSE ATTACHE, THE TOGOLESE FORCES APPEAR TO BE, PERHAPS, THE MOST FIT, WELL DISCIPLINED AND WELL EQUIPPED TROOPS IN THE FIVE-NATION ENTENTE REGION. (BRAZILIAN-PILOTED MACCHI AIR-CRAFT PARTICIPATED IN A FLY PAST ALONG WITH FRENCH JAGUAR JETS. SEPARATE REPORTS ON THESE ASPECTS OF THE CELEBRATIONS WILL BE MADE.)

3. NEXT EVENT OF THE DAY WAS TWO AND ONE-HALF HOUR LONG "MOUVEMENT D'ENSEMBLE" IN STADIUM.
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THIS CONSISTED OF SIX-ACT MORALITY PLAY, FOLLOWED BY EPILOGUE, WITH A CAST OF THOUSANDS. THE TEN THOUSAND PARTICIPANTS IN THIS SPECTACLE, ORGANIZED AND DIRECTED BY EYADEMA'S RPT WITH THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF NORTH KOREANS, TOOK PART IN A NUMBER OF TABLEAUX IN WHICH SUCH THEMES AS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, VANQUISHING THE IMPERIALISTS, ETC. WERE ACTED OUT. IT IS OF INTEREST THAT ONE EPISODE INCLUDED BALLETTIC PARTICIPATION BY 250 "MILITANT" MILITARY. SPECTACLE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY UCLA-LIKE MANIPULATION OF FLASHCARDS BY NORTH KOREAN-TRAINED GROUP IN GRANDSTANDS WHICH CREATED REPRESENTATIONS OF EYADEMA AND PRODUCED VARIOUS STIRRING SLOGANS. THIS EVENT WAS INTERESTING AS THEATER BUT BEYOND DEMONSTRATING CAPACITY OF PARTY TO PUT TEN THOUSAND WELL-TRAINED PEOPLE ON FIELD AT ONE TIME THERE APPEARED TO BE LITTLE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO EVENT. THE NORTH KOREAN INFLUENCE

ON TRAINING OF PARTICIPANTS HAD CURIOUS EFFECT OF CAUSING AFRICANS TO APPEAR TO MOVE LIKE ORIENTALS, WHICH CREATED RATHER BIZAARE AMBIANCE.

4. AT STATE DINNER LATER IN EVENING, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN OPEN IN FRONT OF RPT BUILDING, MOST PARTICIPANTS HAD REACHED ADVANCED STATE OF ZOMBIEDOM. DINNER WAS ABOUT HALF OVER WHEN GIGANTIC FIREWORKS DISPLAY BEGAN. DEBRIS FALLING FROM THE SKIES FROM EXPLODING FIREWORKS AND CLOUDS OF BLACK POWDER SMOKE SOON ENGULFED GASPING DINERS IN ATMOSPHERE REMINISCENT OF BATTLE OF WATERLOO. MERCIFULLY, DINNER SOON CAME TO AN END.

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5. TOGOLESE LEADERSHIP IN STATE OF EXHAUSTED ELATION. MEDIA COVERAGE CONTINUES IN HYPERBOLIC VEIN BUT INTERESTING THEME HAS BEEN ADDED OF LOOKING FORWARD TOWARD "THE SECOND DECADE."

6. MAJOR THRUST OF EYADEMA'S PRONOUNCEMENTS DURING THIS PERIOD HAS BEEN TO REVIEW THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PAST TEN YEARS, PARTICULARLY TO CONTRAST THE SITUATION OF TOGO IN 1967 WHEN HE TOOK POWER TO THE SITUATION AT PRESENT. HE HAS GIVEN LITTLE INDICATION OF HIS INTENTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OTHER THAN TO MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT HE

INTENDS TO CONTINUE RULING. PERHAPS THE BEST KEY
TO HIS INTENTIONS IS AT THE END OF THE SPEECH
HE MADE ON JANUARY 12 IN WHICH HE MADE HIS ACCOUNTING
TO THE NATION. HE SAID "THE FUTURE BELONGS TO
US. IT WILL BE OUR RESPONSIBILITY. WE MUST
CONSTRUCT WITH OUR HANDS THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY.
FOR THAT, IT WILL BE NECESSARY ABOVE ALL TO COUNT
ON OURSELVES, OUR DETERMINATION AND OUR
FAITH IN THE IDEALS OF THE RPT."
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7. COMMENT: THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF PRESIDENT
EYADEMA'S RULE HAVE ENDED AND HE HAS MADE REAL
ACHIEVEMENTS. THE COST OF THESE ACHIEVEMENTS HAS
BEEN AN AUTHORITARIAN SYSTEM OF RULE AND SOMETIMES
CAPRICIOUS ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE. PROBLEMS OF INFLATION,
OVERSPENDING, ENDEMIC SOUTHERN UNREST (LTCOL
KOFFI KONGO, PERHAPS THE MOST PROMINENT SOUTHERNER
IN THE ARMY, WAS ARRESTED IN LATE 1976 FOR AS YET
UNKNOWN REASONS), AND DOUBTLESS MANY OTHERS
FACE AND WILL FACE EYADEMA AND HIS TEAM. HOWEVER,
EYADEMA HAS SHOWN HIMSELF TO BE TOUGH, POLITICALLY
ADROIT, AND CAPABLE OF SEIZING ADVANTAGE OUT OF
OPPORTUNITIES AS THEY COME HIS WAY. PERHAPS,
HOWEVER, THE VERY SUCCESS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL
EFFORT THAT HE HAS LED IN THE PAST TEN YEARS
HAS CREATED POTENTIAL AREAS OF VULNERABILITY. HE
SEEMS INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT DEVELOPMENT
FOLLOWS PRESTIGE RATHER THAN THE OTHER WAY AROUND
WITH THE RESULT THAT PRESTIGE-ORIENTED HIGH-COST
PROJECTS CONTINUE TO BE ELABORATED AND TOGO
CONTINUES TO OFFER ITSELF AS THE SITE FOR
VIRTUALLY ANY FREELOADING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.
THESE FINANCIAL STRAINS, THE ADVANCING AGE OF
THE ARMY CLIQUE WITH WHOM EYADEMA SEIZED POWER,
THE DEMANDS FOR MORE RATIONAL PROCEDURES BY THE
GROWING GROUP OF GOVERNMENT TECHNOCRATS, PERHAPS
EVEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL SUCCESS OF THE RPT ITSELF
ARE ALL STORM CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON OF EYADEMA'S FUTURE.

8. AT THE AGE OF 43, HOWEVER, HAVING ALREADY
SURVIVED FOR TEN YEARS, EYADEMA APPEARS READY
TO MEET AND DEAL WITH MOST FORESEEABLE CHALLENGES
LIKELY TO COME HIS WAY. THE ONCE AWKWARD NONCOM,
FROM A MINORITY NORTHERN TRIBE, HAS DEVELOPED INTO
A NATIONAL LEADER OF CONSIDERABLE SOPHISTICATION
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AND POLITICAL ACUMEN, WHO APPEARS TO ENJOY THE RESPECT OF THE TOGOLESE PEOPLE. HE IS PLAYING A USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY OF MODERATE, WESTERN-ORIENTED LEADERS LED BY HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY OF IVORY COAST WHICH HAS ENABLED EYADEMA TO EXTEND TOGO'S INFLUENCE SIGNIFICANTLY. HE SHOWS CONTINUED CAPACITY FOR GROWTH AND HIS CHANCES FOR REMAINING IN POWER ARE GOOD--PROVIDED: HE REMAINS SENSITIVE TO TOGOLESE POLITICAL REALITIES, MAINTAINS SOUND ECONOMIC POLICIES AND CONTINUES TO AVOID EXCESSIVELY ANTAGONIZING THE MAJORITY SOUTH AS HE FORCES THE PACE OF NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT. PALMER

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